

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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P R 140815Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9378

INFO AMEMBASSY DJAKARTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 4850

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JA, VN, ID

SUBJ: INDOESIAN AMBASSADOR'S VIEWS ON INDOCHINA PROSPECTS

1. I MET WITH INDOESIAN AMBASSADOR MAJOR GENERAL JUSUF RAMLI APRIL 11 FOR A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF PROSPECTS IN INDOCHINA. RAMLI HAD JUST RETURNED FROM DJAKARTA WHERE HE HAD ATTENDED CONFERENCE OF 14 INDONESIAN AMBASSADORS FROM IGGI COUNTRIES AN I WAS INTERESTED IN WHAT IMPRESSIONS HE MAY HAVE PICKED UP THERE.

2. RAMLI OPENED CONVERSATION BY NOTING THAT PRIMARY CONCERN IN INDONESIA IS FOR IMPLICATIONS OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA FOR FUTURE OF U.S. PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. HE OBSERVED THAT POLICIES OF ALL NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES IN AREA HAD LONG BEEN PREDICATED ON UVMS. PLAYING AN EFFECTIVE ROLE. NOW, HOWEVER, THESE COUNTRIES ARE CONCERNED THAT U.S. "UMBRELLA" MAY NO LONGER BE THERE. RAMLI ADDED PERSONAL OBSERVATION THAT HE IS UNSURE AS TO LEADERSHIP OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: " WHO IS IN CONTROL --PRESIDENT OR CONGRESS?" (RAMLI EVIDENTLY HAD DISCUSSED THIS QUESTION IN SOME DETAIL WITH HIS COLLEAGUE FROM WASHINGTON.) RAMLI THEN REFERRED TO INDONESIA'S SPECIAL EXPER-
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IENCE WITH INTERNAL THREAT OF CHINESE COMMUNIST SUBERSION

AND TO EXISTENCE OF LARGE CHINESE POPULATION. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, HE EXPLAINED, INDONESIA IS NATURALLY CONCERNED WHETHER EVOLUTION OF SITUATION IN INDOCHINA WILL RESULT IN STRENGTHENING PEKING INFLUENCE IN AREA AND THUS POSE RENEWED THREAT TO INDONESIA.

3. RAMLI REMARKED THAT INDONESIA HAD LONG HOPED THAT A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT COULD BE ACHIEVED IN INDOCHINA, BRINGING AND END TO HOSTILITIES. IN THIS CONNECTION, I REFERRED TO ACTIVITIES OF ASEAN COUNTRIES IN CAMBODIA AND ASKED FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF THOSE EFFORTS. RAMLI REPLIED BY NOTING THAT PRESIDENT SUHARTO HAD MET WITH LON NOL IN BALI ON HIS RETURN FROM AUSTRALIA. RAMLI HAD LEARNED THAT DURING THEIR CONVERSATION LON NOL INSISTED THAT HE STILL HAD SUPPORT OF MAJORITY OF CAMBODIAN PEOPLE AND SEEMED TO BE HOLDING ON TO HOPE THAT HE MIGHT STILL BE ABLE TO RETURN TO PHNOM PENH. LON NOL URGED SUHARTO TO CONTINUE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SUPPORT FOR KHMER GOVERNMENT, EVEN TO EXTENT OF SENDING TROOPS. (RAMLI REMARKED THAT THIS OBVIOUSLY IMPOSSIBLE.) I REFERRED TO REPORT THAT BEFORE LEAVING PHNOM PENH, LON NOL HAD GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS THAT IF MILITARY SITUATION WORSENER, GOVERNMENT SHOULD SURRENDER RATHER THAN BRING BATTLE INTO CITY. RAMLI THOUGHT IT DOUBTFUL THAT LON NOL WOULD HAVE GIVEN SUCH INSTRUCTION.

4. RAMLI, HOWEVER, DID NOT SEEM TO BE ACQUAINTED WITH DETAILS OF ACTIVITIES OF ASEAN COUNTRIES AND JAPAN IN PHNOM PENH FOLLOWING LON NOL'S DEPARTURE OR WITH THINKING OF THOSE LEADERS WHOM LON NOL LEFT BEHIND. HE SEEMED TO ASSUME THAT KHMER LEADERS WOULD PROBABLY RESIST TO BITTER END AND HE OBVIOUSLY ANTICIPATED A COMPLETE MILITARY DEFEAT. AS FOR FUTURE IN CAMBODIA, RAMLI EXPECTED KHMER ROUGE REGIME TO BE MORE UNDER HANOI'S INFLUENCE THAN PEKING. ALTHOUGH DEPENDENT ON ROLE SIHANOUK WOULD PLAY, RAMLI EXPECTED THAT KHMER NATIONALISTS WOULD BE RESISTANT TO PEKING INFLUENCE.

5. TURNING TO DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, I ASKED RAMLI ABOUT REACTIONS IN DJAKARTA TO RAPID DISINTEGRATION OF GVN MILITARY FORCES FOLLOWING WITHDRAWAL FROM CENTRAL
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HIGHLANDS. RAMLI SAID HE COULD UNDERSTAND THIEU'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW, PRESUMABLY TO CONSERVE AMMUNITION AND SHORTEN LINES OF DEFENSE, BUT SAID THAT GOI WAS SHOCKED AT ROUT WHICH FOLLOWED. RAMLI COMMENTED THAT SITUATION QUICKLY BECAME SO CONFUSED THAT HE PERSONALLY WONDERED WHETHER THIEU HAD ACTUALLY ISSUED ORDERS WHICH INITIATED WITHDRAWAL. RAMLI ALSO VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS. HE DOUBTED WHETHER SVN ANY LONG VIABLE AS INDEPENDENT ENTITY EVEN IF GVN ABLE

TEMPORARILY TO STABILIZE MILITARY SITUATION IN AREA AROUND SAIGON. HE ALSO UNCERTAIN WHETHER FURTHER U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE COULD BE EFFECTIVE IN ALTERING SITUATION. IN SUM, RAMLI ANTICIPATED REPETITION OF KHMER DEVELOPMENT.

6. RAMLI STATED THAT INDONESIA CONTINUES TO HOPE FOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN VIETNAM BUT HE DID NOT SEE ANYTHING THAT INDONESIA OR ASEAN COUNTRIES COULD DO TO MOVE EVENTS IN THAT DIRECTION. HE NOTED THAT ASEAN HAD SOME LEVERAGE IN CAMBODIA AS RESULT OF EFFORTS IT HAD MADE OVER SEVERAL YEARS TO ASSIST AND SUPPORT KHMER GOVERNMENT. ASEAN, HOWEVER, HAD PLAYED NO SUCH ROLE IN VIETNAM WHERE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN IN MUCH STRONGER POSITION. RAMLI THOUGHT FRENCH EFFORTS TO GET POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY MIGHT BEAR SOME FRUIT BUT COMMENTED THAT OBVIOUSLY KEY TO THESE EFFORTS WILL BE THIEU'S RESPONSE.

7. I ASKED RAMLI WHAT IMPLICATIONS HE SAW FOR INDONESIA AND SEA, ASSUMING, AS HE EVIDENTLY DID, EMERGENCE OF COMMUNIST REGIMES IN PHNOM PENH AND SAIGON. IN PARTICULAR, I ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD EXPECT HANOI TO BE DOMINANT INFLUENCE IN WHOLE OF INDOCHINA PENINSULA. RAMLI REPLIED QUICKLY, "IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO HAVE A STRONG HANOI THAN A STRONG PEKING IN THE AREA". HE FELT THAT AT LEAST IN CAMBODIA AND

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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INFO AMEMBASSY DJAKARTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TOKYO 4850

LAOS THERE WOULD REMAIN SOME POSSIBILITY TO COUNTER,BALANCE HANOI'S INFLUENCE,PRIMARILY THROUGH A CONTINUATION AND EXPANSION OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT U.S. WOULD BE WILLING AND ABLE TO ENGAGE IN SUCH AN EFFORT, NOTING THAT IN CAMBODIA THERE WILL BE GREAT REQUIREMENTS FOR EMERGENCY RELIEF AND ASSISTANCE IN REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION. SPEAKING MORE GENERALLY, RAMLI EXPRESSED HOPE THAT U.S. WOULD CONTINUE TO EXERCISE AN INFLUENCE IN SEA. IN PARTICULAR, HE HOPED THAT U.S. COULD LEND ITS SUPPORT AND INFLUENCE TO AN EFFORT TO DRAW HANOI INTO CLOSER ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES AND THUS FORESTALL POSSIBILITY OF A DRIFT TOWARD CLOSER ASSOCIATION WITH PEKING. HE LOOKED FORWARD TO POSSIBILITY THAT HANOI COULD BE BROUGHT INTO ASEAN AND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN AREA. RAMLI OBVIOUSLY CALCULATED THAT THE "NATIONALISTIC" IMPULSE IN ALL COUNTRIES OF INDOCHINA PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXERT AN EFFECTIVE COUNTER-FORCE TO THE EXTENSION OF PEKING'S INFLUENCE, EVEN THOUGH HANOI IS LIKELY TO BE DOMINANT IN AREA.

8. COMMENT, EMBASSY NOT SUFFICIENTLY ACQUAINTED WITH RAMLI TO KNOW WHAT DEGREE OF ACCESS HE LIKELY TO HAVE TO THINKING WITHIN INFLUENTIAL GOI CIRCLES, NOR ARE WE IN A POSITION TO
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KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT HIS VIEWS REFLECT MAIN LINES OF THINKING IN DJAKARTA. EMBASSY DJAKARTA'S COMMENTS WOULD THEREFORE BE APPRECIATED. RAMLI, HOWEVER, STRUCK ME AS HAVING GIVEN SOME THOUGHT TO QUESTIONS TOUCHED ON IN OUR CONVERSATION AND I WOULD IMAGINE THAT HE HAS SHARED SIMILAR VIEWS WITH HIS COLLEAGUES HERE IN TOKYO. FOR THESE REASONS, I THOUGHT THEY MAY BE OF INTEREST TO THE DEPARTMENT. I LEAVE TO DEPARTMENT'S DETERMINATION WHETHER THEY ARE OF SUFFICIENT INTEREST TO PASS TO AMEBASSY SAIGON AND OTHER SEA POSTS.
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